

AN APACHE LIFE-WAY

535 On the mask, at the forehead or nose
532 region, may be suspended a piece of abalone shell or turquoise.
825 One shaman employs the shell "because abalone has strength,
[823] and the masked dancers should have the same strength as the
abalone."

535 At its top the hood is attached to the horns¹ or uprights by
532 spreading prongs of a piece of oak which has been split, soaked
[824] in water, and heated until it could be worked. At its upper end
[322] this piece is connected to the yucca or sotol frame which rises
above it. A bunch of turkey feathers or some green juniper is
tied at the point of union. The superstructure of wooden slats
looks like a great, squarish candelabra balanced on the top of
the dancer's head. It is essentially a horizontal bar to which ver-
tical pieces approximately two feet high have been attached at
the two ends and in the middle. From each end of the horizontal
support hang two or four short lengths of wood called "earrings."
These strike against one another, making a sound that has be-
come a symbol for the approach of the dancers. From the tops of
the vertical pieces float downy eagle feathers. The colors of the
uprights are black, yellow, and green (blue);² red "would be used
only by a witch on a masked-dancer horn."

535 The shaman, drum in hand, may accompany his dancers to the
[1954] edge of the clearing. Then, often, he will join the group of men
[1956] who have gathered at the north of the ceremonial structure to
sing for the masked dancers.

535 But the entrance of the dancers may be delayed still further,
955 for they are often called upon at this time to cure. Yet the fic-
tion of their purely social function at the puberty rite is main-
tained by having what serious ritual they attempt remain a pri-
vate matter, unguided by the sponsors of the ceremony:

[1996] ¹ That the headdress should be called "horns" is of special interest, in the light
[825] of the fact that Mountain Spirits are associated with the protection and guard-
ianship of game animals, the most important of which have horns.

[386] ² Juice of the yucca leaf is mixed with charcoal, yellow ochre or a decoction
from algerita root, and soft turquoise to obtain these colors. The addition of the
yucca juice makes the difference between the impermanent paint used on the
bodies of the dancers and the fixed color with which the headdress and sticks are
painted. Green and blue are not terminologically differentiated.

1: Opler E-5 (1931-1937) 1941
(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua

FOLK BELIEFS AND MEDICAL PRACTICE 241

Since it is so dangerous when lightning strikes near by, everything is avoided that might "draw" it:

When I was little I was told not to have anything red around when it was raining. Even in camps we used to stick red things under something so they wouldn't show. We consider it dangerous to have red things out during a storm. It is because they draw lightning. Red is connected with lightning. And today the Chiricahua do not like anything red to be around when it rains, like a red blanket. It is covered up or taken off the bed.

During a thunderstorm the Chiricahua refrain from eating, even though the food is prepared and waiting. Eating during a storm causes much lightning, it is thought. Even if nothing else happens, a person who eats during lightning will lose his teeth.

A paint [pied or spotted] horse is dangerous during a thunderstorm. If you are riding one at such a time, you get off.

It is dangerous to have a little fawn around in the rainy season. If they find one, they get scared and let it go, for lightning is likely to strike you if you keep it.

The Mountain People are ordinarily pitted against disease, but they may themselves cause sickness if their rules are ignored. "The Mountain Spirits may cause you to become disfigured. That is why the masked dancers do not touch each other. Many are afraid of this sickness." Insanity may be regarded as punishment for omission of necessary ritual gestures during the masked-dancer preparation: "If the masked-dancer headdress is put on without ceremony, it makes you crazy; you see the Mountain Spirits all the time."

Menstrual blood.—Menstrual blood is dangerous for males, and girls are taught to dispose carefully of pads worn during the flow. The illness suffered by a man or a boy as a result of contact with menstrual blood is always described as rheumatism or malformation of the joints. The most serious form of the malady is contracted from union with a menstruating woman. "The Chiricahua are afraid to have intercourse with a woman during her period. It makes them misshapen and deformed. They become unable to straighten their arms or legs. I heard of one man who did this. This man was pointed out to me. He was deformed in this way."

756
755 Some shamans next seek to learn whether they will be able to relieve the patient. One ceremonialist has, in recent times, looked at the sick person through a black silk handkerchief to determine this. Another draws the moon or a star with pollen on the palm of his right hand, and figures appear for him which permit him to prophesy concerning the outcome.

[533] To determine the cause of the ailment and to learn what he
[782] must do to cure it, the shaman sings and prays. In this way he
[776] attracts the attention of the guardian spirit with whom the songs
756 and prayers originated. He may sing without musical accom-
755 paniment, or he may beat time with a curved drumstick on the
534 pottery drum that has been thus described:

[533] Women make the pot. Men fix it to sing with and make the drumstick. The
[462] drum is a piece of buckskin stretched over a clay pot. Water and four pieces of charcoal, each the size of the end of my thumb, are put in. The charcoal is required for a ceremony. It makes the sound good too. The water is to keep the buckskin damp. The buckskin is wet and stretched over the mouth of the pot. It takes several men [to fix the buckskin in place]. It is sounded until it is right and then tied. Then four little holes are made in the buckskin. If this is not done, it will not be much of a drum. It helps the sound and is of ceremonial importance too. The drumstick is made of any kind of green wood that can be bent. Oak is sometimes used for it.

Less frequently the musical accompaniment is a rattle of some kind. Rattles of eagle claws and mountain-goat hooves have been mentioned for shamanistic rites. Occasionally, the shaman has an assistant who drums for him and aids him throughout the rite.

756 The songs are formal and unvarying for any one ceremony.
755 The prayers tend to be extemporaneous, however, reflecting the
[533] need and the occasion. The song, and often the prayer, is divided
[782] into four parts or verses, all alike except for different associations of color and direction. The traditional color-directional association which is found in the mythology is black for the east, blue for the south, yellow for the west, and white for the north. Shamans take repeated liberties with this scheme, but for any one rite internal consistency is maintained. It is at the second or fourth verse of a song or prayer, or at the end of the second or

1: Opler E-5 (1931-1937) 1941
(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua

FOLK BELIEFS AND MEDICAL PRACTICE 283

not get a man well, I know that the man is mistaken about his trouble. If I get a person well, I usually get other payment besides the ceremonial gifts. For the ceremonial gifts I must receive a horse, a piece of turquoise with an eagle feather stuck through a hole in it, and an unblemished buckskin, these four things. They must be given before the ceremony starts. I have the feathers on my hat and the turquoise I wear through the ceremony.

755
756
[431]

The ceremony can take place in the day or the night, but it has to be continued for four days or four nights. If a person got struck or frightened by lightning in the afternoon, the ceremony would begin in the afternoon. I try to begin it at about the same time of day or night that the experience with lightning occurred.

First of all in my ceremony I smoke. I blow the smoke to the four directions, calling each by its color name. Then I call on Thunder and say, "Before you did this to him, this man's body and spirit were in a healthy condition. Now he is sick. I plead with you to breathe some of your spirit into this man, to make him over as he should be."

755
[276]

I have to have medicine for the sick person too. To make this medicine I take wood from a tree which has been struck by lightning, burn it, take the ashes, and put them in cool water. Scrapings from abalone shell are put with it too. With the ashes I make a lightning design (a zigzag) on the four sides of the cup. And I make the lightning design on the man's face, running it into the mouth. I pray, and while I pray I raise the cup upward four times, then toward the patient three times, and make the patient drink on the fourth.

[531]

Then I begin with the songs. This is my first song:

[533]
[539]

He in the sky who is holy,
He who is Black Thunder
Who put up the earth,
He zigzags down with life
To impart life to her body;
He in the sky who is holy,
Black Thunder, my father.

[823]
[822]

This same song is sung to the other directions; the color terms alone change. At the end of the second song I push the chest, back, and sides of the patient with my hand four times and then blow the evil influence away. While I am singing, I am asking help of my power.

After the four songs I pray again. This last part changes to suit the occasion. Then the ceremony for this one day or night is finished. This power of mine comes from Thunder. Thunder power carries you to old age.

[978]

I have a hat that goes with this ceremony. I was ordered by a dream to make the hat. I do not use the hat in the ceremony or use it at all. I was told in my dream that the hat would just be for luck in the ceremony. But the hat belongs to Lightning; it belongs to this ceremony. It is copied after the old way.

756
292
[787]
[777]

I lost this hat one time. Later I was walking with four men. We were hunting

THE ROUND OF LIFE

449

Only two play against each other at a time. When they start to play, one takes the hoop, and they walk to the center. Each man is holding his pole. These poles are long, almost as long as the playing field. One of the poles is colored red at the butt end. The one with the hoop rolls it toward the grass ridges, using an underhand motion. When the hoop is about to fall over, the men slide their poles after it. Each wants the butt of his pole to fall under the hoop. The butt of the pole is notched and marked, and each notched part which shows up under the hoop counts so much. The hoop is notched too, and it also has a knotted string tied across the middle. We call these knots "beads"; the biggest knot is in the middle.⁶ You make something, too, according to the notches or the "beads" which cross the pole. All these notches have names. You agree on how much they should count before the game begins, and you agree how many points are needed to win.

The two men play from the center, first to the east, and then to the west. Only the winning throw is counted each time, and only one score, that of the man who is ahead, is kept. What he gets is added to his score and what the other fellow gets is subtracted from it. Men gamble a great deal on this game.

In a real game of this kind you are not allowed to cross the playing field from the east while anyone is throwing. That's the rule. I don't know why it is, but they play it like that. And they don't allow any dog near the grounds where they are playing hoop-and-pole. Also it is strictly forbidden any girl or woman to go anywhere near the hoop-and-pole ground. Any woman who comes around will get swollen joints and pains in her legs. And it would sort of paralyze her. The women never come near the place; they go a long way to avoid it. If a woman even comes in sight, the men straighten up and hold the pole up straight until she passes out of sight. Women and children know where the ground is and keep away from it. There are a good many things to remember in this game. A man who is playing doesn't like anyone to step on his shadow. It makes him lose his luck.

Little material is forthcoming concerning the origin and mythological background of the game, but the words of one informant suggest an association between the pole and the snake:⁷

⁶ One informant claims that there should be 50 "beads" on each side of the big "bead," making a total of 101. Another described a hoop which had 30 "beads" on each side of the big "bead." Evidently there are minor variations in the "ways" of the hoop-and-pole makers.

⁷ When the trickster Coyote loses all his possessions in a gambling game, it is, characteristically, the hoop-and-pole game he is said to have been playing.

⁸ When M. R. Harrington purchased a hoop-and-pole set from its Chiricahua maker in 1909, he was told: "The red paint on the wheel and on one pole represents a snake. Two men were arguing as to who had the strongest supernatural power. Finally, one took a snake and made a hoop of it to show his power. Not to be outdone, the other took a snake and transformed it into a pole. Then, as

1:Opler E-5 (1931-1937)1941

(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua

476 Because AN APACHE LIFE-WAY

551 the name is so intimate a facet of the personality, one
765 of the most rigid injunctions forbids the mention of the name of
the recently deceased. If the dead person must be mentioned,
a qualifying phrase provides a safeguard:

[152] There should be no mention of a dead person. To mention the name of the
dead reminds relatives of him and makes them feel bad; it only causes sorrow.
Besides it might prove dangerous. To call the name of a dead person at any time
is bad, and especially after dark.

[195] We are instructed, in case it is necessary to use the name of the dead, to put a
word after the name which means "who used to be called." Another way is to
say "the one who used to be a relative of So-and-So." The avoidance of the
name is not observed only before the relatives of the dead person. It is a general
observance.

When an elder of the family, who has been in close contact
with the children, dies, their names are changed:

The children of the family get different names then. The person who has died
has called the children by this name that is being dropped; that is why they don't
want it used any more. The older people don't have their names changed be-
cause of this, however.

If the relative who suggested one's name dies, that name is
sure to be changed: "'Little' was my first name. Later a
name was given to me by my grandmother. When she died, it
was changed."

When a person who is named after something of common ref-
erence dies, the people are reluctant to use the term for a long
time after the death. "They are especially careful around the
relatives." Circumlocutions and synonyms are employed until
[195] the danger period is past. Even the use of relationship terms is
[601] restricted because their utterance might stimulate painful mem-
[152] ories or ghost anxieties:

If you have two relatives that you call by the same relationship term and one
of them dies, you don't call the other by this term for a while. You call him by
his name until the dead person is forgotten. Then you can use the relationship
term to him again.

765 Those outside the relationship group in which a death has
578 occurred must exercise the greatest care not to arouse the resent-
822 ment of the bereaved:

What the relatives do not like if a person dies is to see in the next few days
anyone wearing a red dress, a red shirt, a red headband, or red clothes of any
kind. It hurts the feelings of those who have lost their relative to see this. If a

1: Opler E-5 (1931-1937) 1941

(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua

DEATH, MOURNING, AND THE UNDERWORLD 477

death occurs near by, others take off their red clothes at once. It is because red is colorful and stands for a good time. If your relative dies and you see someone wearing red, you say, "Well, that fellow wore red when I was sad. When his relative dies, I'm going to wear red just for meanness." Fights and bad feelings can start from this; enemies can be made in this way. 765
578
822

And yet, in spite of all the determined efforts to obliterate the memory of the dead, a prolonged period of formal mourning is sanctioned. 765

For some time after the death of his wife a man will not dress in fine clothes or colors. And he won't go to social dances. He won't even be invited, because the people know he isn't thinking of such things. A woman will not attend the social dancing at a puberty rite, though it is held several months after her husband's death. She will wait about a year before she will go to such affairs.

Moreover, regardless of all warnings concerning the danger of excessive grief, some individuals find it impossible to repress their sorrow. 765
152

A woman may wail for a dead relative before sunrise for years after he dies if some special calamity has come which she thinks wouldn't have come if the relative were alive. Or she may wail when she sees a special friend of her dead son, or one who is of the same age and looks like him.

While the relatives are observing the necessary rites, the ghost of the departed makes its way or is led by other ghostly kin to the underworld, "a beautiful place beneath the ground, where a nice stream of water flows between banks that are lined with cottonwood trees; and everything is green." This home of the departed has been variously termed by informants "where the cottonwoods stand in a line," "ground that is streaked with red," "underground," "where they go off," and "where they go down." The last two names refer to the manner of reaching this subterranean paradise: 775

Our concept is down, a place beneath. When I was a child, many years ago, the Chiricahua never talked about where other Indians go at death. They just talked about where their own people, the Chiricahua, go. We think of a dead person going on to another life—of his whole body, as it was on earth, going to the other world. He is really transferred to that other world.

When a person is very sick and is unconscious, it is said that he is somewhere else, that his ghost has gone where the dead people are, to visit his friends. If he regains consciousness, it is because his ghost gets back again, and when he gets well he may tell where he was. Every once in a while someone has an experience like this. That is how we know where the place is and what it looks like. [753]
[787]

CHIRICAHUA APACHE POWER

11

he comes. These articles have to be given to the shaman if the cure is to be a success. They are given before the ceremony really gets started. Pollen, turquoise, abalone, feathers, white shells, and a black-handled knife are among the objects which may be needed.

(See also *An Apache Life-Way*, p. 259.)

Whether or not he expects all of them as ceremonial payment, the shaman has a variety of ritual paraphernalia and substances on hand to be used in the ceremony: some combination of pollen, eagle feathers, abalone, turquoise, unblemished buckskin, animal parts, baskets, designed clothing, specular iron ore, a carved and designed cane or staff, yellow ochre, various other paints, plants, and medicines. The attitude toward some of these sacred substances and objects and the manner in which they are used are detailed thus by informants:

In my ceremony I use tule pollen at sunrise. The next night I use piñon pollen. The third morning at sunrise I use pollen from pine. The fourth day at noon I use sunflower pollen. All shamans use pollen. It stands for life and health. In a ceremony I saw Geronimo perform, he used pollen to make signs to the directions and then put the pollen in the sick man's mouth. He made crosses of pollen on the man's head, chest, right shoulder, back, and left shoulder.

Abalone has life. It has lots of good. Everything good is in it. Many shamans use it. Many of them say that without it they cannot carry on their ceremonies. When it is real blue inside it is male. This is the most powerful kind. When it is not the good color, when it is greyish, it is female. For my ceremony I polish the outside and use the scrapings for medicine. It is good for any kind of pain anywhere. It is also a protection against witches. I put some in medicine to cure lightning sickness too.*

* It is interesting to note that while abalone shell contrasts with turquoise, the representative of the male principle in Chiricahua religion, and stands for the female principle, abalone which is bluish inside is called "male" and abalone which is pinkish or whitish is termed "female." Evidently the alternation in both instances is due to a color-sex association, blue for male and a light color (pink, white, grey) for female.

756
778756
755
778
824756
755
778
237
825
822
831
789831
822